

# *Iowa Outdoors*

## **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

### **www.iowadnr.gov**

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**Sept. 9, 2008**

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## **RELAXED FISHING REGULATIONS AT LAKE DARLING**

BRIGHTON - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will relax the fishing regulations at Lake Darling on September 12, to allow anglers to more freely harvest fish before the lake is completely drained to repair a spillway leak, extend the dam, and to perform a lake restoration project. The lake water level is currently in slow decline due to the loss of water through the spillway.

The valve gate, however, will be completely opened in late fall or early winter to facilitate dewatering activities that will result in a full pool draw-down.

"We decided to empty the lake because the integrity of the dam has been compromised by a nearly four-million gallons per day spillway leak, as well as the impending need for a large-scale lake restoration," said Chad Dolan, area fisheries biologist for the DNR.

Dolan said the water quality of Lake Darling has degraded over time due to sediment and nutrient inputs from the large watershed. The lake also has a substantial population of common carp that has contributed to sediment resuspension and further reductions in water clarity. Efforts will be made to collect and relocate the lake's quality game fish to park ponds or to other state-managed waters. Planned lake and watershed restoration activities will ultimately benefit water quality, and subsequently, achieve a more desirable fish community in the future.

On September 12, anglers with a valid fishing license may harvest all sizes and unlimited quantities of any fish species from Lake Darling. Any number of fishing poles or jugs will be allowed, but anglers must remain in sight of these lines at all times and follow all other fishing regulations and area rules. Trot lines will be allowed (name and address must be attached); however, lines may not be set across the entire water body. Nets, dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices, or any stupefying substances will not be allowed. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters, but sportfish

can be stocked in private lakes and ponds. It is important that anglers never transport and release common carp, or for that matter, any other nuisance fish species into any aquatic system.

The normal park hours of 4 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. will remain in effect. Anglers may fish anywhere within the lake as water levels should permit fishing from the bank and boats for the foreseeable future; however, access ramps will be exposed a few weeks after commencement of draw-down activities preventing further boat-fishing. Liberalized fishing regulations for Lake Darling will remain in effect until the lake is drained.

Sediment control structures such as ponds, terraces, and risers are already constructed in the watershed, and more are planned for the future. The fishery renovation is also part of the process to improve the lake's water quality. The lake restoration project includes stabilizing shoreline erosion problems, removing sediment, increasing the pool elevation of the lake, constructing in-lake fish habitat, constructing and repairing jetties, deepening shoreline and repairing the dam.

The lake will remain dewatered throughout the construction period which is expected to last through 2009, or potentially longer, depending on the weather impacts on construction activities. During this juncture, all watershed and in-lake construction projects will be completed. Fish will be restocked once construction has ceased and the lake's water elevation returns to normal. Users should expect limited access to the lake until normal lake water elevation returns in 2010.

**For more information contact Iowa DNR Fisheries at 319-694-2430.**

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## **SUMMER FLOODING STILL IMPACTING RIVERTON AREA**

Adaptability may be the key word for Riverton duck hunters for the September waterfowl season. Work is still underway to repair to damages from the May flooding, including temporary repairs to the main access road.

For the early waterfowl season vehicle access will be restricted to the north access road, entering the wildlife area two miles north of Riverton, off 330<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Vehicle parking will be restricted to parking areas only.

Flooding has also affected hunting conditions. The water level in the main Riverton area will be similar to previous years, but the majority of the wetland will be open water. Wetland vegetation is limited to the east, south and west edges. The walk in area will only have water in the north segment, about one-third of this popular area. The Jensen Tract, south of the town of Riverton, will have limited water as well. There will most likely not be enough water for boat access.

It is hoped that both public access and water conditions will be improved by the beginning of the October 18 duck season.

Updated access information and water conditions are available at 712-387-2032.

**For more information, contact Carl Priebe, DNR wildlife biologist at Riverton, at 712-374-3133.**

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## **NEW 24-HOUR HOTLINE TO UPDATE OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE PARK CONDITIONS**

The Iowa OHV Association, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, has recently added an OHV Park Hotline to keep the public up-to-date on park closings and park issues throughout the state.

The hotline number, **515-281-8385**, will have the most up-to-date information available to the public 24 hours a day.

As issues arise with the parks, changes can be made without needing to wait for the information on the internet to be updated, although the web site with park closure information, [www.iowaohv.com](http://www.iowaohv.com), will still be maintained and updated.

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## **RESIDENT HUNTERS PREPARE TO SNAP UP ANTLERLESS DEER LICENSES**

DES MOINES – Beginning Sept. 15, Iowa residents may purchase as many antlerless deer licenses until the quota fills or the season ends. Residents may purchase one antlerless deer license until Sept. 15.

Counties with antlerless deer licenses that have sold out of the quota include Butler, Webster, Hamilton, Worth and Plymouth. Counties that are close to selling the quota include Carroll, Crawford, Floyd, Franklin, Greene and Mitchell. The DNR updates the county antlerless quota on the internet at <https://hfwacentraltechnology.net/iowadnr/app/mainQuota.do>

The November antlerless season licenses will go on sale Nov. 15, in the counties that have antlerless licenses remaining. The date in the hunting regulations was listed in correctly as Nov. 10.

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## **THREE RIVERS, 47 TONS OF TRASH, 141 SPONSORS, 221 PARTICIPANTS...AND ONE HUGE “THANK YOU!”**

MEDIA CONTACT: Brian Soenen at (515) 205-8587 or at [Brian.Soenen@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:Brian.Soenen@dnr.state.ia.us).

DES MOINES — Many Iowans still gauge a day's work by the dirt found under their fingernails. For Project AWARE volunteers, add the dirt from ears, toenails, and every crack and crevice in between, and you have one incredibly successful day. Project AWARE, which stands for A Watershed Awareness River Expedition, is coordinated by the Iowa DNR and involves hundreds of people who volunteer to clear Iowa's rivers from trash and other debris.

This past August, 221 people participated in the 6th Annual Project AWARE, traversing more than 80 miles of the Winnebago, Shell Rock and Cedar rivers, and removing more than 47 tons of trash along the way. While many say they have never worked harder or gotten dirtier than they did on AWARE, they also say they have never had as much fun. By the end of the weeklong expedition, they had plenty of dirt – and river trash – by which to measure their work.

In addition to the rivers, the people, and the trash, nearly 150 individuals, businesses and organizations provided equipment, camping, logistical assistance, and of course, money, needed to make Project AWARE possible. Without the enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work of volunteers and the financial and in-kind support of sponsors, the trash would still be there and Project AWARE would not exist.

The Project AWARE staff would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt “Thank You” to all those who volunteered to clean up the river and to all those who made it possible.

#### **Platinum Paddle Sponsors (\$3,000+)**

Black Hawk County Conservation Board, Butler County Conservation Board, Iowa State University Recreation Services, Rockwell Collins, University of Northern Iowa – Leisure, Youth & Human Services Division, United States Geological Survey, University of Iowa Hygienic Lab, Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Financial & Business Assistance, IOWATER, Keepers of the Land, Law Enforcement, Iowa Water Trails

#### **Golden Yoke Sponsors (\$2,000 - \$2,999)**

Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Society

#### **Silver Stern Sponsors (\$100 - \$1,999)**

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**Life Jacket Sponsors (Up to \$100)**

Bliss Warnke, Daryl Anderson, Dave and Patty Hansen, Debra Robin, Floyd Soil & Water Conservation District, Fogdall RV, James and Donna McCabe, Jason McVay, Jean Gordon, Melanie Sadeghpour, Mike DeLong, Miranda Caldwell, Roger Schnittjer

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